(b) At present there are no sanctioned works which are yet to be started.

(c) Railway's share of the cost of the Projects is allocated to Plan head "MTP" in the Railways' Annual Plan.

Backlog of SC/ST vacancies in Railways

97. SHRI MOHINDER SINGH KALYAN: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the post-wise breakup of reserved posts for SC/ST lying vacant in various railway zones till date; and

(b) the action being taken to clear the backlog of reserved posts in various categories and for promoting the SC/ST employees in accordance with the reservation rules?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ): (a) Detailed below are the number of posts which were identified for filling up as on 30.6.96, are lying vacant for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes on the Zonal Railways/Production Units as on 31.12.96 in recruitment category:—

	SC	ST
Group 'C'	599	646
Group 'D'	813	1387

(b) As per the Directives of Department of Personnel & Training (DOP&T), a Special Recruitment Drive has been launched from 15.7.96 to fill up the vacant posts of SC/STs in recruitment to be completed by 31.3.97.

15% and 7-1/2% reservation for SC/STs are provided in vacancies/posts filled on promotion in each category and these are being followed.

Promotion of IRTS Officers

98. SHRI RAM NATH KOVIND:
DR. RANBIR SINGH:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the issue of delay in promotion of Selection Grade IRTS officers to Senior Administrative Grade has been reported in some dailies of Delhi recently;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether promotion of Selection Grade Officers working in other departments viz, Accounts, Stores, Mechanical and Electrical of Railways and Railway Board is held up in view of this delay;

(d) whether there is a sharp discontentment amongst the officers because of this delay;

(e) whether Government propose to take some action to ensure promotion of deserving officers without further delay; and

(f) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ): (a) and (b) A news item on delay in promotion of IRTS officers to Senior Administrative Grade appeared in Hindustan Times of 02-02-97.

(c) to (f) SAG panels of IRSE, IRSSE and IRMS for the year 1996-97 have already been finalised. SAG panels of IRTS, IRSEE, IRSS, IRSME and IRAS are awaiting approval of competent authority. Panel formation in the Railway Services is an ongoing and time consuming process and all efforts are being made to finalise the panels as soon as possible.

Survey for gauge conversion of Rangia-Murkongselek rail line

99. SHRI TARA CHARAN MAJUMDAR: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the survey undertaken for gauge conversion of Rangia-Murkongselek and linked lines to Tezpur and Bhalukpong in Arunachal Pradesh have since been completed; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ): (a) No, Sir.

(b) It is a long section having a number of major bridges, as such the survey will take about 6 (six) months for completion.

Setting-up of budget hotels by Railways

100. SHRIMATI URMILABEN CHIMANBHAI PATEL: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Railways have a plan to set-up one hundred budget hotels in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is proposed to set-up such hotels at Veraval, Dwarka, Okha and important tourist cities in Gujarat; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ): (a) to (d) The proposal is in a conceptual stage.

Derailments

101. *SHRI AKHILESH DAS:* Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of derailments which affected train services in the country since May last, Zone-wise;

(b) the causes of these derailments;

(c) the amount of loss suffered by Government on account of disruption of train traffic during the above period; and

(d) the measures Government propose to take to check derailments?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ): (a) Railway Zone-wise break-up of derailments during the period May 1996 to January 1997 is as under:—

Central — 34, Eastern — 16, Northern — 32, North-Eastern — 5, Northeast Frontier — 11, Southern — 18, South-Central — 20, South-Eastern — 35, Western — 23, Metro — 1, Total — 195.

(b) Main causes of the derailments were human failure, equipment failure and sabotage.

(c) Cost of damage to railway property on account of the derailments was Rs. 25 crores (approx.)

(d) Some of the measures taken to improve safety and prevent derailments are as under:—

(i) Upgradation of track structure is being undertaken on a planned basis using 60 kg rails and concrete sleepers.

(ii) During the last two years, Complete Track Renewal work has been carried out covering more than 5600 kms.

(iii) There has been progressive increase in use of Tie Tamping and ballast cleaning machines for track maintenance.

(iv) For monitoring track geometry and running characteristics of the track, sophisticated track recording cars, oscillography cars and portable accelerometers are being progressively used.

(v) Maintenance facilities for coaches and wagons have been modernised and upgraded at many depots.

(vi) To prevent cases of cold breakage of axles, ROH Depots have been equipped with ultrasonic testing equipment for detection of flaws in the axles.

(vii) Training facilities for drivers, guards and staff connected with train operation have been modernised, including use of Simulators for training of drivers.

(viii) Refresher courses are regularly organised at specified intervals.

(ix) Performance of the staff connected with train operation is being constantly monitored and those found deficient are sent for crash training.

(x) Periodical safety drivers are conducted to inculcate safety consciousness among the staff.

Objection of Railways for Hinduja Project in Visakhaptnam

102. SHRIMATI JAYAPRADA NAHATA:
DR. Y. LAKSHMI PRASAD:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Railways have objected to the Hinduja project in Visakhapatnam in Andhra Pradesh, as reported in The Asian Age, dated 9-1-1997;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps proposed to clear the project early?